

BRIERLEY-HILL

URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Annual Report

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31st, 1898.

BRIERLEY-HILL :

PRINTED BY FORD & ADDISON, "ADVERTISER" OFFICE.

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1899.

BRIERLEY-HILL URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

CHAIRMAN ... COUNCILLOR E. W. PEARSON, J.P.
 VICE-CHAIRMAN ... „ T. G. DRINKWATER.

. . COUNCIL . . .

NORTH WARD.

Councillor JOHN BENTON „ THOMAS CLULEE „ GEORGE JOHN COOPER „ JOSEPH DEELEY		Councillor THOMAS GEORGE DRINKWATER „ ARTHUR R. WARBY
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EAST WARD.

Councillor ISAIAH BARKER „ EDWD. DARLING „ ELIJAH WILLIAM PEARSON		Councillor SIDNEY PITT „ HENRY WEBB „ THOMAS WILLIAMS
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WEST WARD.

Councillor DAVID WALTER COOPER „ JOSIAH GORDON „ RICHD. BOURNE GUEST		Councillor JOSEPH LEWIS SOLOMON „ MORETON „ MARK ROLLINSON
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Sanitary Committee :

The whole of the Members of the Council.

CHAIRMAN ... COUNCILLOR T. CLULEE.

Medical Officer of Health :

H. D'ARCY ELLIS, L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S.

Clerk :

WILLIAM WALDRON, Solicitor.

Surveyors :

J. W. BECKLEY AND P. G. BECKLEY.

Analyst :

E. W. T. JONES, F.I.C.

Sanitary Inspector :

JOHN ALDEN.



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ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR 1898.

To the Chairman and Members of the Brierley-Hill Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

During the past year the number of deaths registered was 246, of which 130 were males and 116 females.

The population is estimated at 12,120.

The death-rate for the year 1898 is, therefore, 20·29 per thousand of the population.

The death-rate for the preceding year of 1897 is 18·13 per thousand of the population.

The number of births during the year is 430—207 males and 223 females.

The birth-rate is 35·47 per thousand of the population ; that of the year 1897 being 33·19.

The ages at which the deaths occurred during the year are as follows :—

Under 1 year of age	... 74	15 years and under 25	... 11
1 year and under 5 years..	47	25 years and under 65	... 61
5 years and under 15	... 11	65 years and upwards	... 42

Fourteen Inquests were held during the year. The verdicts were :—
Accident, 4 ; natural causes, 6 ; suicide, 4.

Comparative tables of Birth-rate, Death-rate, and Zymotic Death-rates, with corresponding rates taken from the Annual Report of the County Medical Officer, for the year 1897.

	Birth-rate per 1,000 of Population.	Death-rate per 1,000 of Population.	Zymotic Death-rate per 1,000 of Population.	Date.
Brierley-Hill ...	35·47	20·29	4·4	1898.
Brierley-Hill ...	33·19	18·13	1·7	1897.
County of Stafford				
Urban ...	34·8	18·6	2·91	1897.
Ditto Rural ...	30·3	15·7	1·57	1897.
England and Wales ...	29·7	17·4	2·15	1897.
Large Towns in England ...	30·6	19·1	2·87	1897.

Appended to this Report will be found the usual Tables, giving particulars of the causes of death, and the diseases notified. Also the Surveyor's and Sanitary Inspector's Reports. Report of Food and Drugs Act not received in time for insertion.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

SCARLATINA.

No. of cases, 44 ; Deaths, 0 ; Houses, 36.

The number of cases notified during 1897 was 45.

This makes the sixth year during which Scarlatina has been prevalent in the district.

Cases were notified every month with the exception of May. They occurred amongst that class of the population where it is most difficult to get systematic attention to sanitary rules and regulations, and where efficient isolation is an impossibility. Our working rule of visiting each

case, enquiring into the sanitary surroundings, providing disinfectants, and leaving printed instructions, has been regularly carried out. Nounce has also been sent to the head teachers of the public elementary schools, and the attendance officer, with a request that none of the children be permitted to return to school until a certificate of fitness to do so has been produced.

I am afraid that some parents disregard the instructions given to them, and by sending their children in an infectious state to Sunday schools and entertainments keep up the prevalence of the disease. We must endeavour to trace some of these offenders, and deal with them in such a way as to be a warning to others.

ENTERIC OR TYPHOID FEVER.

Notified, 23 cases ; Died, 4 ; Houses, 13.

The number of cases notified during 1897 was 17. The first cases were notified in January at Dudley-street, at a fish dealer's premises, adjoining the Dudley Arms Inn. There were six cases at this house, three of which were removed to the Isolation Hospital and recovered. They were all severe cases, and although it is costly to provide trained nursing for so few cases at the Hospital, we have the satisfaction of knowing that at least three of those lives were saved by it, as I do not think they could possibly have recovered under the circumstances in which I found them. They were in a state of great poverty, and unable to obtain either food or nursing. The insanitary condition of these premises has been frequently before you, and a good deal has been done from time to time to improve them. Owing to the confined back premises, W.C.'s had been put in ; but on this occasion, owing to the carelessness of the occupiers, I found two of the W.C.'s in a very foul and dirty condition. They were at once put in working order and well cleansed and disinfected, and the occupiers were cautioned against permitting them to get into such a condition again.

I believe, however, that this outbreak was due to some oysters of which the family had partaken freely. Two other persons had also partaken of some of the same lot of oysters, and they also had typhoid fever.

It is highly probable that the removal of the cases to the Isolation Hospital checked any further spread of the disease in that locality. These houses are all supplied with the S. Staffs. Water Co.'s water.

In January, there was also another case at Dudley-street, which was removed to the Hospital. The water supply was taken from a well on the premises. This water was analysed and condemned.

Then there were two cases later on, in April and June—one at Moor-street and one at Delph; and in both of these cases the water supply was taken from wells on the premises.

In August, there was a case at Level-street which was imported from Colwyn Bay, North Wales.

In October there was another outbreak. The cases occurred at Bank-street. Three cases in one house at Harley's Buildings, all of whom died; and four cases at No. 20, one of whom died at the Hospital; all of the four latter were removed to the Hospital.

At Harley's Buildings the premises were in a good sanitary condition and the Company's water was laid on. At No. 20 the sanitary condition of the premises was bad; but this has since received attention.

At the same time there were two severe cases at Moor-street, at one house, and in these cases also the Company's water was used and the sanitary condition of the premises good. At Bank-street there were nine cases altogether; the cause remains a mystery, but there can be little doubt there was a common cause. There had been a case at a farm house in the neighbourhood, where milk was sold; none of this milk had been sold to the people at the infected houses. The milk was obtained from the dairy agents, and they denied having obtained any milk from the farm in question. I got a list of the farms from which the dairy milk was stated to have been obtained, and my enquiries through the Medical Officers of Health for the districts in which the farms were situated, did not throw any light on the question.

DIPHTHERIA.

Two cases; Died, 0; Houses, 2.

One case occurred in July, at Mill-street. The drainage was defective and was attended to. The other case occurred at Albion-street; the occupier had used the back kitchen in which there was a sink connected with the drain, and I think this was the probable cause. They were requested not to use the kitchen as a living room, and to disconnect the drain.

The membrane from this latter case was sent to Mason College, and the bacteriological examination proved it to be diphtheria.

Both were mild cases and recovered.

GENERAL DEATH-RATE.

The Death-rate 20·29 is above the average of the past ten years, which is 17·8. It may be accounted for by the high Zymotic death-rate, which is due to an epidemic of measles—the Zymotic mortality from that disease alone being 2·8—and to a higher mortality from diseases of the respiratory organs, due to pneumonia following on outbreak of influenza in the early part of the year.

Infant Mortality.—It is satisfactory to note we have not exceeded the average of the past ten years—last year it was 189 per 1,000 births—eighteen of the deaths were due to premature birth, or insufficient vitality at birth. The infant mortality accounts for 6·1, or nearly one-third of the deaths per 1,000 of the population.

Phthisis.—There were twelve deaths from this cause—7 males and 5 females. Two were ironworkers, 2 clerks, 1 boatman, 1 labourer, and 1 youth, 3 domestic servants, and 2 girls of school age.

EXCREMENT REMOVAL.

This work is still in the hands of a contractor. The three years' contract will terminate next April, and the question now arises whether you will continue to have the work carried out under that system. The system is universally condemned and can only be supported on the ground of cost.

During the year frequent complaints were made as to the delay on the part of the contractor in emptying the middens and ashpits, the nuisances arising therefrom, and danger to health being constantly brought to my notice, and although he may not have been always to blame, some better plan seems to be very desirable.

The midden nuisance is a matter of perennial interest; its faulty construction, and the infrequent removal of its contents affording

inexhaustible material for discussion before your Sanitary Committee—*ad nauseam*. In previous Annual Reports I have endeavoured to point out the reasons why this is one of the most difficult questions with which you have to contend, and may be briefly stated as follows :—

1.—**The Contract System.**—By giving out this work for competition, and accepting the lowest tender, you do not get the best results. The main object of the contractor is to make a profit. However much he may desire to give satisfaction to the Council, it goes without saying, that his personal interests will have the first consideration.

2.—**Structural Defects.**—The construction, insanitary condition, and means of access of a large proportion of the privy-middens increases the difficulties and cost of cleansing, by absorbing more time and labour than should be necessary.

3.—**Notices.**—The present system of leaving it to the occupier or owner to give notice when these places require cleansing does not work satisfactorily.

The Contract System.

I am assured by your present contractor that it is quite impossible to do the work satisfactorily *at the price at which he tendered to do it* three years ago. As this contract is about to terminate next April, I think the question whether the work should be offered for competition requires your most careful consideration. I have no hesitation in advising you to abandon the contract system, as I consider it has proved to be a complete failure. You have given this system an extensive and fair trial, and I do not think you have been satisfied with it. The time has now arrived when you should seriously consider the advisability of taking this work directly under your own control, and carry it out with your own servants. By having the whole machinery in your own hands, the work would be much more thoroughly and efficiently done. It is imperative that some more satisfactory method should be adopted, and in your deliberations upon it, I would respectfully ask you to place this important question upon higher grounds than that of cost alone.

Defective Closets.

I regard this as the most important obstacle the contractor has to contend with. Many of these structures are much too large, difficult of access, and contain filthy liquid excrement. They are frequently made the receptacle of rubbish of every conceivable description. The above conditions are a great hindrance to the work. To call upon all the owners of property to convert these structures into good, dry, sanitary closets is undoubtedly a very serious question, but it is also a very serious question to allow them to remain insanitary. To make these places sanitary, they should have a good impervious floor, level with or only a few inches below the surrounding surface, be well roofed and ventilated, so that the contents can be kept dry, and nothing but dry ashes should be thrown into them. If a separate receptacle were also provided for other rubbish and part of the ashes, and its use made compulsory by a bye-law, it would be an advantage. A dry privy-midden, such as I describe, can be readily and quickly cleansed, and there would be no disgusting liquid filth deposited in the streets during the operations, thus getting rid of one of the most objectionable of nuisances. The dried dust in the street, where these liquid deposits have occurred, is also a danger to be reckoned with, as it may get blown about and deposited on food exposed for sale, or inhaled by passers-by. The above remarks do not apply to new buildings, as in that case care is now taken to ensure a better system. The alterations to the older structures should be more thoroughly done, not only to make them more sanitary, but also to make them more accessible to the scavengers.

Notices.

A complaint book is provided for these notices to be entered in. There is no difficulty in obtaining access to it. It is the fault of the people themselves if advantage is not taken of this opportunity of giving early notice of nuisances. The small house occupier is proverbially careless in sanitary matters. Experience has proved that the nuisance is in many cases allowed to accumulate until the cleansing becomes urgent. If these urgent notices come in from several parts of the district on the same day, it upsets the system of working to give immediate attention to them, and there is consequently some delay. I have investigated a good many of these complaints, and find there is often exaggeration and unreasonable abuse, which a little more con-

sideration and attention to giving notice at the proper time might have prevented. Though this is so it cannot be denied that there have been cases where, after giving proper notice, an unreasonable time has elapsed before the cleansing has been attended to. Something further appears to be necessary, and I think it can be met by more regular and systematic official inspection of these particular nuisances, so as to ensure more frequent attention to them. The inspection should be daily, and the scavenging regulated in accordance with the requirements. If this work cannot be undertaken by your present staff then some appointment should be made to meet it.

An examination of the Sanitary Inspector's monthly reports for 1898 shows the contractor's monthly average of work done, and I think clearly indicates the direction in which some more definite regulations should be adopted. There are 1,673 privies and 1,294 ashpits in the district, all of which the contractor undertakes to cleanse. Taking the ashpits as the better guide to the amount of work done, I find the Inspector's monthly reports show that 1,822 ashpits have been cleansed during the year, or an average of 151 per month. As there are frequently two privies to one ashpit, they come out at an average of 182 per month. Supposing you require your Contractor to cleanse out every privy and ashpit within the district once in every three months, he must empty 431 ashpits per month. I do not suppose anyone will contend that once in three months is too frequent cleansing for these nuisances—it is, in fact, not sufficient—but the figures show that your past efforts are very far short of even this standard. An average of 182 privies per month is wholly inadequate for the requirements of the district, and I feel sure once you recognise this fact, you will endeavour to put this department upon a better system. If the structural obstacles I have already referred to, make it impossible to regulate the work by any fixed rule, does not that show the necessity of adopting some standard of improvement which shall bring all of these places as nearly as possible into line? With more efficient and systematic inspection, more regular and frequent removal, it is not improbable that once the system is well established, very little extra labour would be required than it now takes to do the work in an unsatisfactory and inefficient manner.

There is another way of looking at this question. If you press forward with your scheme of deep drainage, the majority of the privy-middens

could be abolished, and the water-carriage system adopted. This would remove most of your present difficulties and at least half the cost of scavenging would be saved. There is no reason, however, why the probability of an early adoption of deep drainage should interfere with the structural alterations of the present privy-midden, as the alterations could be made so as to meet the requirements of W.C.'s, without any further serious cost to the owners of property.

Sanitary Notes.

The Isolation Hospital has been twice used during the year for the reception of Enteric Fever. From February the 4th to April 23rd, four cases from Brierley-Hill and seven cases from Quarry Bank. From October 31st to November 24th, three cases from Brierley-Hill.

The Steam Disinfector has been used on 49 occasions to disinfect clothing, etc., after Scarlatina.

Houses Fumigated.—Forty-four houses have been fumigated and and disinfected after Scarlatina and Enteric Fever.

Water Supply.—Thirty-four houses have been supplied with the Company's water. No complaint of the supply has reached me, and the water continues to be of excellent quality. Three samples of well water have been analysed and condemned.

Dairies and Cowsheds.—Your Inspector reports these places as satisfactory. I do not altogether agree with this opinion as I think there are some which are not kept as clean as they should be, and the manure remains too long in close proximity to the sheds. This subject has lately become of so great importance that I intend shortly to inspect these places and report upon their condition.

In my last Annual Report, I referred to the unsatisfactory way in which notices to abate nuisances had been disregarded by some of the property owners. I can now report more favourably upon this subject, the notices generally having been better attended to. With the exception of the night-soil removal, the general sanitary work of the district has been more satisfactory.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

H. D'ARCY ELLIS.

February 6th, 1899.

TABLE I.
Mortality from all Causes, distinguishing Deaths in Children under 5 years.

	Small-pox.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	Fevers.					Cholera.	Erysipelas.	Measles.	Whooping Cough.	Diarrhoea.	Rheumatic Fever.	Bronchitis & Pleurisy.	Pneumonia.	Phthisis.	Heart Disease.	Injuries.	All others.	Total.
Under 5 Yrs. of Age.	...	...	1	...	Typhus.	Typhoid.	Puerperal.	Continued.	Relapsing.	...	...	23	4	17	...	9	16	1	...	...	45	116
5 Years and upwards	...	...	...	...	...	4	1	...	...	...	...	4	...	2	1	18	10	11	14	7	58	130

REGISTERED BIRTHS.			REGISTERED DEATHS.			MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES AT SUBJOINED AGES.					
Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 years and upwards.
207	223	430	130	116	246	74	47	11	11	61	42

TABLE II.
 Population—Number of Persons per acre. Birth and Death-rates at all ages, and among Children under One Year, and the Death-rates from Zymotic Diseases, Phthisis, and Diseases of the Respiratory Organs.
 Estimated Population, 12,120. Number of Acres, 1,027.

Date.	Census, 1891.	Estimated Population to middle of 1898.	Number of Persons per acre.	Birth rate per 1,000 of Population.	General Mortality per 1,000 of Population.	Mortality in Children under one year of age, per 1,000 Births.	General Zymotic Mortality, per 1,000 of Population.	Individual Mortality per 1,000 of Population.			
								Enteric Fever.	Diarrhoea.	Phthisis.	Diseases of Respiratory Organs.
1898.	11,847	12,120	11.7	35.47	20.29	172	4.6	0.3	1.5	0.9	4.3
Average of past ten years.				34.76	17.8	171	1.9	0.08	1.4	0.2	2.4

TABLE III.
WARDS—Showing the Mortality in Each.

1898.	NORTH WARD	...	...	Population.	Area in Acres.	No. of Persons per Acre.	No. of Deaths.	Death-rate per 1,000 of Population.	Zymotic Death-rate per 1,000 of Population.	Death-rate from Enteric Fever.	Ditto Phthisis.	Ditto Diarrhoea.	Ditto Diseases of Respiratory Organs.
				3,873	437	8.8	88	22.72	5.1	1.0	1.3	1.8	4.3
	EAST WARD	...	...	4,251	244	17.4	95	22.34	5.1	nil.	1.4	1.6	4.7
	WEST WARD	...	...	3,996	346	11.5	63	15.78	3.2	nil.	0.2	1.1	3.7

TABLE IV.
INFECTIOUS DISEASES.—Monthly Notifications.

	January.	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.	Total, 1898.	1897.	1896.	1895.	1894.	1893.
Small-pox...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	17	39
Cholera ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	2	...	...	...	...	...
Diphtheria ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	1	...	2	1
Membranous Croup ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10	8	1	1	2
Erysipelas ...	1	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	4	45	53	82	74	17
Scarlatina...	9	5	2	1	...	3	6	1	3	6	4	4	44	17	18	7	16	32
Enteric Fever ...	3	4	1	1	...	1	...	2	...	5	5	1	23	17	18	7	10	10
Puerperal Fever ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	...
TOTAL ...	13	9	4	3		4	7	3	3	11	11	7	75	77	86	102	122	101

Surveyor's Report,

For the Year ending 1898.

Sewers.—Number of yards laid down with Doulton's glazed pipes, 473. Previous year, 365.

Buildings.—Number of Plans passed, 24. Previous year, 21.
Number of Houses erected, 29. Previous year, 30.

Repairs to Roads.—Quantity of metal distributed, 1,360 tons.

Length of Roads in the District Repairable by Council, $10\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

Paving.—There has been very little paving done this last twelve months.

Generally, many Crossings have been re-laid and constructed, and the same remark applies to Kerbs and Channels throughout the district.

The Sewers have been periodically flushed and are now in good condition. Open Ditches have received frequent attention as necessity requires.

J. W. BECKLEY,

SURVEYOR.

February 9th, 1899.

SUMMARY OF SANITARY WORK

*Done in the Inspector of Nuisances' Department during the year 1898,
in the Urban District of Brierley-Hill.*

			Inspections and Observa- tions made.	Formal Notices by Authority.	Nuisances Abated after Notice.
Dwelling-houses and Schools.	Foul Conditions ...	...	175	18	18
	Structural Defects ...	...			
	Over-crowding ...	...	9	9	9
	Unfit for Habitation ...	...			
	Lodging-houses ...	...			
	Dairies and Milkshops ...	...	23	Inspected Quarterly and found Satisfactory.	
	Cowsheds ...	...	21		
	Bakehouse ...	...	10		
	Slaughter-houses...	...	9		
	Canal Boats ...	...	105		
House Drainage	Ashpits and Privies ...	...	3928		
	Deposits of Refuse & Manure ...	...	3		
	Water Closets ...	...	10		
	Defective Traps ...	...	29	29	29
	No Disconnection...	...	5		
	Other Faults ...	...	2		
	Water Supply ...	...	34		
	Pigsties ...	...	4		
	Animals improperly kept ...	...	17		
	Offensive Trades ...	...			
	Smoke Nuisances ...	...			
	Other Nuisances ...	...			
	Totals ...	...	4384	56	56
					Nos.
Seizures of Unwholesome Food ...					1
Samples of Food taken for Analysis ...					
,, ,, Found Adulterated ...					
,, of Water taken for Analysis ..					
,, ,, Condemned as unfit for use ...					
Precautions against Infectious Disease.					
Lots of Infected Bedding Stoved or Destroyed ...					49
Houses Disinfected after Infectious Disease ...					44
Schools ditto ditto ...					
Prosecutions for not Notifying Existence of Infectious Disease					
Convictions ditto ditto					
Prosecutions for Exposure of Infected Persons or things ...					
Convictions ditto ditto					

Signed, JNO. ALLDEN,

Inspector of Nuisances.